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SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2016
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE IN ADVANCE OF AUGUST 20
ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL IN CAIRO
REF: STATE 136507

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs, a.i. Martin Quinn, reason 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) On August 19, CDA delivered demarche in advance of August 20 Arab League Ministerial to MFA Assistant Under Secretary for International Cooperation Mohammad Abdul Rahim

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Abdul Jalil. (UAE Foreign Minister and Under Secretary are already in Cairo.) Ambassador Abdul Jalil said that the UAE fully supported UNSC 1701, citing Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed's leadership role at the Beirut Ministerial and in New York, but at the same time expressed strong doubt that the Arab League would adopt a stand in Cairo recommending immediate or unconditional release of the two Israeli soldiers. In the aftermath of the large scale

destruction in Lebanon, Abdul Jalil said public sentiment was running in exactly the opposite direction and would demand a return of Lebanese prisoners in exchange for the Israelis, suggesting Arab leaders would be disinclined to resist the tide.

12. (C) Abdul Jalil agreed completely with the position that Lebanon reconstruction must be led by the Government of Lebanon -- rather than by Hizballah passing out wads of "what everyone knows is Iranian money." He noted that while the UAE stands behind efforts to prevent sale or supply of arms to Hizballah, disarming the Islamic guerrilla group would be extremely problematic and could not happen overnight: "We just can't say, 'Hand over your arms tomorrow.'" Abdul Jalil also noted that in order to achieve a long term solution in Lebanon, Hizballah's "excuses" to incite violence -- prisoners in Israeli jails and Sheba'a Farms -- must be "removed."

13. (C) In an effort to acquaint the CDA with "what the Arab street feels" about the post ceasefire situation, Abdul Jalil mentioned the anti-U.S. drumbeat in the Arabic media and also a recent poll by Cairo's Ibn Khaldun Center indicating that the three most popular figures in the Islamic world are now: Hassan Nasrallah, Khalid Mishal, and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

14. (C) According to Abdul Jalil, the best thing the U.S. can do at present to improve its negative image in the Arab world (made worse, he said, by the recent conflict) would be to get out in front in the campaign to rebuild Lebanon and to provide humanitarian assistance to its displaced, injured and homeless. CDA noted that the U.S. has made an initial \$50 M pledge, plans to send a high level delegation to the donor conference in Sweden, and has long been known in Beirut for the work of the American University. Abdul Jalil acknowledged the American record, but said the U.S. should move quickly to build an American hospital, fund the construction of apartment blocks and contribute to the de-mining program -- all in the mainly Shi'ite south of Lebanon: "That's where you need to focus U.S. efforts in order to counter Hizballah's campaign."

15. (C) On Bashar al-Asad's speech praising Hizballah, Abdul Jalil (who served in Damascus four years ago) opined that "other Arab leaders were not happy with his remarks." The language, he suggested, emanated from the old guard surrounding the Syrian president, a weak leader compared to his father.

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